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ABSTRACT

Each year, Macomb Community College (MCC), in Michigan, conducts a study to determine the extent to which the training received by the previous year's graduates met the needs of area employers. Surveys were mailed to 305 employers for whom release of information forms were completed by the graduates in a November 1994 survey. Completed forms were received from 199 employers and responses were compared to findings from studies conducted over the previous 4 years. Study results included the following: (1) employers rated the overall training provided by MCC at 4.33 on a 5-point scale, with employers consistently giving a rating of over 4 points in each of the past 4 years; (2) 83% of employers rated work opportunities as good or very good, while 82% rated the 3-year outlook as good or very good; (3) 41.7% of the employers were from service industries; 25.6% were from manufacturing; 11.6% were from retail; 7.0% were from finance, insurance, and real estate; 2.5% were from transportation, communications, electric, gas, and sanitary services; 3% were from public administration; and 3.5% were unclassifiable; (4) on a 5-point scale, employers rated graduates' willingness to learn at 4.66, cooperation with co-workers at 4.62, cooperation with management at 4.58, personal initiative at 4.56, acceptance of responsibility at 4.53, attitude toward work at 4.51, and quality of work at 4.46; and (5) the lowest rated areas of graduate characteristics were communication skills at 4.16 and technical knowledge and problem solving skills at 4.11 each. (The survey instrument is appended.) (KP)

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FOLLOW-UP REPORT ON EMPLOYERS OF 1993-94 GRADUATES
Macomb Community College
March 1995

Each year, as part of its graduate follow-up studies, the Department of Research & Evaluation (R&E) conducts a survey with employers of the previous year's graduates. The purpose of this survey is to determine how well the education received by Macomb graduates meets the employers' needs.

More than half of Grad 1 respondents who supplied employer information are employed by Macomb County firms. Another 43% are evenly divided between Wayne County and Oakland County firms, with 4% employed by firms outside the tri-county area and/or out-of-state.

Methodology

The list of employers was compiled from consent to release information forms returned by respondents to the Grad 1 survey which was conducted during November, 1994. These forms were sent to the various employers together with a survey questionnaire and cover letter in mid-January, 1995; a second mailing to those employers who had not yet responded occurred about 10 days later.

Surveys were coded by departmental staff, sent to a contracted data entry firm, and subsequent printouts were generated from magnetic tape using SAS. The instrument is attachecd as Appendix A.

Response Rate

Five year data are presented in Table 1. As the footnote to Table 1 explains, if an employer refused to answer the survey on the basis that it was against company policy, that company was added to a list of non-participating employers established from prior years. If that company name appeared subsequently, a survey was not submitted based on prior knowledge that the company would not participate. The number of respondents (employers) who refused to complete the survey because of company policy has decreased in part, we believe, due to the use of the consent to release information supplied to every employer and signed by the employee. The actual response rate has increased over the last five years, especially in the last two.

TABLE 1. Employer Response Rates

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
N employers ID'd	519*	402*	357*	427	305
N employers responding	396	256	217	271	217
N employers refused to complete survey	78	24	24	18	18
Net response	**318**	**232**	**193**	**253**	**199**
% response	61%	58%	54%	59%	65%

*These numbers do not include employers who previously indicated it was against company policy to complete the survey (a list of 197 companies) and whose names, therefore, were removed from the list before mailing.

Overall Rating of MCC

Employers have consistently rated the overall training provided by MCC above 4 on a 5-point scale. **Possible choices were very poor (1), poor (2), average (3), good (4) or very good (5).** Table 2 presents a 5-year comparison of mean ratings.

TABLE 2. Overall Rating of MCC Training

Year of survey	# Respondents	Mean score
1991	303	4.30 (5 pt scale)
1992	225	4.27 (5 pt scale)
1993	192	4.29 (5 pt scale)
1994	241	4.37 (5 pt scale)
1995	**193**	**4.33 (5 pt scale)**

Job Outlook

Employers have an optimistic view of jobs in their particular fields. Eighty-three percent say that the job outlook today is good or very good, with a mean score of 4.27 on a 5-point scale.

They are a bit less optimistic about three years down the road. Eighty-two percent say that the job outlook three years from now is good or very good, with a mean score of 4.20 on a 5-point scale.

Employer categories

A new question on the Employer Survey concerned the company's Standard Industrial Classification (SIC). While many employers were able to provide this code without difficulty, we received several phone calls. Other companies simply provided a description of their work and the code was added by R&E based on the *Standard Industrial Classification Manual* (U.S. Office of Management and Budget, 1987). Table 3 presents a comparison of

data between the 1994 survey (the first time this information was used) and the 1995 survey.

Division A, which has shown nearly a 100% increase from last year, includes veterinarians and veterinary clinics--all the employers in the Division for this year. Division I, Services, includes educational institutions, health services, churches, child-care, etc. Many respondents in this category represented area hospitals and doctors, but also represented local school districts, a couple of private/parochial schools and Macomb Community College. Employers included under Division J (Public Administration) represent police and fire departments as well as administrative areas for various municipalities.

Specifically, graduates are employed in industries related to health services (34), transportation equipment (25), educational services (15), engineering/accounting/research services (13), business services (12), fabricated metal shops (10), veterinarians (9), depository institutions (banks or credit unions) (8), miscellaneous manufacturing industries (7), general merchandise stores (6). Based on employer responses, another 25 types of businesses employ from 1-4 MCC graduates of the class of 1993-94.

TABLE 3. Employers by SIC

Division/Description		1994	1995
A.	Agriculture, forestry and fishing	2.3%	4.5%
B.	Mining	---	---
C.	Construction	4.3	< 1%
D.	Manufacturing	17.4	25.6
E.	Transportation, communications, electric, gas, and sanitary services	3.6	2.5
F.	Wholesale trade	3.2	--
G.	Retail trade	9.1	11.6
H.	Finance, insurance and real estate	7.1	7.0
I.	Services	43.9	41.7
J.	Public administration	6.7	3.0
K.	Unclassifiable	2.0	3.5

Characteristics of Graduates

Table 4 presents longitudinal data on the sixteen characteristics or abilities employers were asked to rate. These items were rated by 83% to 97% of respondents. The characteristics are presented in descending order, based on mean scores from this current survey. Again, 5 was high (very good) and 1 was low (very poor).

TABLE 4. Employers' Mean scores on Graduates' Characteristics

Characteristic/Skill	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Willingness to learn	4.56	4.57	4.54	4.61	4.66
Cooperation with co-workers	4.48	4.42	4.36	4.45	4.62
Cooperation with management	4.53	4.45	4.47	4.52	4.58
Personal initiative	4.35	4.34	4.29	4.40	4.56
Accepting responsibility	4.45	4.46	4.46	4.50	4.53
Attitude toward work	4.43	4.39	4.31	4.41	4.51
Quality of work	4.40	4.33	4.41	4.37	4.46
Following instructions	4.37	4.35	4.33	4.41	4.41
Operation of equipment	4.40	4.35	4.39	4.43	4.36
Quantity of work	4.25	4.18	4.25	4.29	4.31
Meeting the public	4.28	4.13	4.19	4.30	4.28
Ability to organize	4.14	4.14	4.12	4.26	4.23
Mathematical skills	4.10	4.13	4.10	4.16	4.21
Communications skills	4.18	4.07	4.03	4.20	4.16
Technical knowledge	4.16	4.16	4.15	4.22	4.11
Problem-solving skills	4.13	4.06	4.06	4.18	4.11

Employer Comments

Employer comments were grouped into the following categories:

- Communication Skills
- Interpersonal Skills
- Computer Skills
- Technical/Occupational Skills
- General Education
- Miscellaneous

However, several respondents indicated that their employee had various skills or was employed prior to attending Macomb. One also suggested having the graduates rate the various characteristics. These two items will be considered prior to the next round of follow-up surveys.

Judith Adams, Research Analyst
Project Director
Project #95-006
March 1995

Macomb Community College

EMPLOYERS FOLLOW-UP SURVEY **Dept. of Research & Evaluation**

If your company has a policy prohibiting a response that may appear to be an evaluation of an employee, please check here ☐ and return this form in the business reply envelope enclosed.

1. What is your OVERALL rating of the training received by our graduate as it relates to the requirements of the job?
   - ☐ 5 Very good
   - ☐ 4 Good
   - ☐ 3 Average
   - ☐ 2 Poor
   - ☐ 1 Very poor

2. In your opinion, what is the job outlook **TODAY** for employees in your field?
   - ☐ 5 Very good
   - ☐ 4 Good
   - ☐ 3 Average
   - ☐ 2 Poor
   - ☐ 1 Very poor

3. In your opinion, what will the job outlook be **THREE YEARS FROM NOW** for employees in your field?
   - ☐ 5 Very good
   - ☐ 4 Good
   - ☐ 3 Average
   - ☐ 2 Poor
   - ☐ 1 Very poor

4. What is your Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) Division and Major Code?

   _____ _____
   Division Major

Please rate the training received by the MCC graduate named at left. Respond only to those areas you feel are appropriate.

	Very Good 5	4	3	2	Very Poor 1
5. Accepting responsibility	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Personal initiative	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Willingness to learn	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Cooperation with co-workers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. Cooperation with management	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. Attitude toward work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. Mathematical skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. Technical knowledge	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. Organizational ability	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. Communication skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. Problem-solving skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
16. Work quality	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
17. Work quantity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
18. Meeting the public	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
19. Following instructions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
20. Operating equipment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

21. We would appreciate any suggestions for improving the skills of future graduates or general comments you may have about MCC and its training.

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_____

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_____

Thank you for assisting us in this survey. Please return this form in the enclosed business reply envelope as soon as possible.

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